

Third Sunday in Easter

26th April 2023



The Greeting

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All He has given us new life and hope.

He has raised Jesus from the dead.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

HYMN

1 Christ is the King! O friends rejoice;
brothers and sisters, with one voice
let the world know He is your choice.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2 O magnify the Lord, and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

3 They with a faith for ever new
followed the King, and round him drew
thousands of servants brave and true.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

4 O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the way disciples followed then.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

5 Christ through all ages is the same:
place the same hope in His great name,
With the same faith His word proclaim.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

6 Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

7 So shall God's will on earth be done,
new lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
and the whole church at last be one.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Opening Prayer

Faithful one, whose word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

A reading from the New Testament

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2. 14a, 36-41

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

³⁶ Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

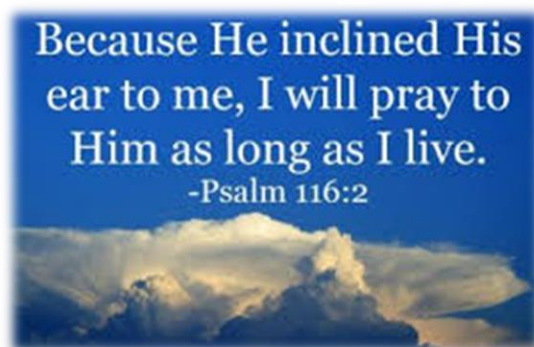
³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

¹ I love the Lord, because he has heard
 my voice and my supplications.
² Because he inclined his ear to me,
 therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
³ The snares of death encompassed me;
 the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
 I suffered distress and anguish.
⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
 "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"
⁵ Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
 our God is merciful.
⁶ The Lord protects the simple;
 when I was brought low, he saved me.
⁷ Return, O my soul, to your rest,
 for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
⁸ For you have delivered my soul from death,
 my eyes from tears,
 my feet from stumbling.
⁹ I walk before the Lord
 in the land of the living.
¹⁰ I kept my faith, even when I said,
 "I am greatly afflicted";
¹¹ I said in my consternation, "Everyone is a liar."
¹² What shall I return to the Lord
 for all his bounty to me?
¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
 and call on the name of the Lord,
¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people.
¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord
 is the death of his faithful ones.
¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant;
 I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
 You have loosed my bonds.
¹⁷ I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
 and call on the name of the Lord.
¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord,
 in your midst, O Jerusalem.
 Praise the Lord!



The Epistle
 1 Peter 1. 17-24

17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. 18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Love's redeeming work is done,
fought the fight, the battle won.
Lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er!
Lo, he sets in blood no more!

Lives again our victorious King;
where, O death, is now thy sting?
Dying once, he all doth save;
where thy victory, O grave?

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal!
Christ has burst the gates of hell;
death in vain forbids him rise;
Christ has opened paradise.

Soar we now where Christ has led,
following out exalted Head;
made like him, like him we rise,
ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to thee by both be given:
thee we greet triumphant now;
hail, the Resurrection thou!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke
Glory to you O Lord.

Luke 24 13-35
The Walk to Emmaus

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, [h] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah [j] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Emmaus lies to the west of Jerusalem and as the two disciples made their journey home, the sun sinks ahead of them and the evening closes in. They are walking into a night that falls.

In their sorrow they had lost hope and forgotten Jesus' words that he was the light of the world.

Jesus joins them but they do not recognise him. He asks what troubles them. He listens and hears their poignant, wistful, bewildered, regret and sorrow "We were hoping he was the one..."

When their story is done, Jesus tells them His. Using the Hebrew scriptures, He shows that the man Jesus, whom they mourn, was the focus of God's plan long foretold.

This tells us of the ability of Jesus to make sense of things. To them the whole situation seemed to have no explanation. But as He talked to them the meaning becomes clear and their incomprehensible darkness becomes infused with the light of understanding.

What difference might it make to our faith if we allowed ourselves to be honest and open in our 'conversation' - our prayers - and to receive from Jesus a similar understanding.

Jesus is OUR friend and he calls us HIS friends (John15.15). Good friends talk to each other.

I remember my Grandfather holding up his hand and saying "If in your life you have as many friends as you have fingers on one hand, you are blessed." I was a child, I had lots of friends; it was years before I understood what he meant. In my own life I can think of three, two of whom have died. Those sorts of friends are rare.

"What a friend we have in Jesus" is a hymn that is out of fashion now. But this old hymn is eminently practical, simple and straightforward. *'Take to the Lord in prayer'* is the repeated line. Unlike many modern worship songs, it is not designed to appeal to our feelings but rather to reinforce faith in the living presence of Jesus Christ in the everyday ups and downs of our life.

The man Jesus was bound by time and space, the Spirit of Jesus is not, but is with us always. The Holy Spirit is to us, all that the physical presence of Jesus was to the first disciples.

That is an extraordinary thought.

When they reach their home, Jesus makes as if he would have gone on, but they ask him to stay. It is the courtesy of Jesus that he would not force himself but he awaited their invitation to come to their home. How well this illustrates the greatest and most perilous gift to the world, the gift of freewill. We can invite Jesus into our lives or allow him to pass on.

Theirs is a very ordinary home and no doubt a very ordinary meal but it is in this ordinary home over an ordinary meal that they recognise hm. Maybe it was his hands or his action which remind them of the

day he took bread and fed 5000, or the day in the upper room when he broke the bread and gave it to them, "This is my body....". But in that fleeting moment they knew. And he vanishes from their sight. They leave the meal uneaten; they hasten back to the others. Now they are not going into a night that falls but into a dawn which breaks.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray for the church and for the world and thank God for his goodness

We pray for the witness of the Church remembering particularly our brothers and sisters in the faith who suffer discrimination and persecution. Embolden us that we may share the gift of salvation and wholeness found in our Lord Jesus.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

We pray for King Charles as he prepares for the coronation. For our Government and for leaders of nations whose decisions and actions affect us all. Enlighten them with your wisdom and truth that they may act with integrity seeking the common good.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

We pray for our world which struggles to live justly and in peace. For those who suffer through lack of food and clean water, those whose lives are blighted by conflict and instability preventing a settled life; for refugees and the displaced and those held captive or in prison.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

We pray for those whom we love, for our friends, the close ones and those we sometimes forget. We thank God for them and what they mean to us. We commit to your peace all who have died whom we remember in love, and in common sympathy we pray for all who mourn.

These, and all the silent prayers of our hearts we offer to God.

Gathering our prayers and praise into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us;

Our Father which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life;
and the blessing of ☩ God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and those for whom you pray
now and always
Amen

HYMN

Now is eternal life,
If risen with Christ we stand,
In him to life reborn,
And holden in his hand;
No more we fear death's ancient dread,
In Christ arisen from the dead.

And God, the living God,
Stooped down to man's estate;
By death destroying death,
Christ opened wide life's gate.
He lives, who died; he reigns on high;
Who lives in him shall never die

Unfathomed love divine,
Reign thou within my heart;
From thee nor depth nor height,
Nor life nor death can part;
Our life is hid with God in thee,
Now and through all eternity.

*

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

4. Blessed Saviour, Thou hast promised
Thou wilt all our burdens bear;
May we ever, Lord, be bringing
All to Thee in earnest prayer.
Soon in glory bright, unclouded,
There will be no need for prayer—
Rapture, praise, and endless worship
Will be our sweet portion there

Joseph M Scriven

Joseph Scriven was born in 1819 of prosperous parents in Banbridge, County Down, Ireland. He graduated with a degree from Trinity College, Dublin in 1842. His fiancée accidentally drowned in 1843, the night before they were to be married. In 1845, at the age of 25, left his native country and migrated to Canada, settling in Woodstock, Ontario. His reasons for leaving his country seem to be the religious influence of the Plymouth Brethren upon his life estranging him from his family. He only remained in Canada briefly after becoming ill, but returned in 1847.

In 1855, while staying with James Sackville in Bewdley, Ontario, north of Port Hope, he received news from Ireland of his mother being terribly ill. He wrote a poem to comfort his mother called "Pray Without Ceasing". It was later set to music and renamed by Charles Crozat Converse, becoming the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus". Scriven did not have any intentions nor dream that his poem would be for publication in the newspaper and later becoming a favourite hymn among the millions of Christians around the world.

About 1857 he moved near to Port Hope, Ontario where he again fell in love and was due to be married, but in August 1860 his fiancée suddenly fell ill of pneumonia and died. He then devoted the rest of his life to tutoring, preaching and helping others. In 1869 Scriven published a collection of 115 Hymns and other verses which did not include "What a friend".

Scriven drowned in 1886 at age 66. It isn't known if his death was an accident or a suicide, as he was in a serious depression at the time. A friend reported, "We left him about midnight. I withdrew to an adjoining room, not to sleep, but to watch and wait. You may imagine my surprise and dismay when on visiting the room I found it empty. All search failed to find a trace of the missing man, until a little after noon the body was discovered in the water nearby, lifeless and cold in death." He was buried next to his second fiancée in Bewdley. (Wiki source)